NOMINATION OF JOHN W. VESSEY, JR., TO BE CHAIRMAN OF THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF

HEARING

BEFORE THE

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES
UNITED STATES SENATE

NINETY-SEVENTH CONGRESS

SECOND SESSION

ON

NOMINATION OF

GEN. JOHN W. VESSEY, JR., U.S. ARMY, TO BE CHAIRMAN OF THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF, SERVING IN THE GRADE OF GENERAL, PURSUANT TO TITLE 10, UNITED STATES CODE, SECTION 142

MAY 11, 1982

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NOMINATION OF GEN. JOHN W. VESSEY, JR., U.S. ARMY, TO BE CHAIRMAN OF THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF

TUESDAY, MAY 11, 1982

U.S. SENATE,
COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES,
Washington, D.C.

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 9:35 a.m., Senator John Tower, chairman, presiding.

Present: Senators Tower, Goldwater, Warner, Humphrey, Jepsen, Brady, Stennis, Jackson, Byrd, and Levin.

Also present: Senator David Durenberger and Senator Rudy Boschwitz.

Staff present: Rhett B. Dawson, staff director and chief counsel; Francis J. Sullivan, minority staff director; Paul C. Besozzi, minority counsel; Christine E. Cowart, chief clerk; Anthony J. Principi, counsel; Richard D. Finn, George K. Johnson, Jr., James R. Locher III, and José E. Martinez, professional staff members; Drew A. Harker, and Ralph O. White, research assistants; and Tamara L. Jones, staff assistant.

Also present: Buzz Hefti, assistant to Senator Warner; Jim Dykstra, assistant to Senator Cohen; Jon Etherton, assistant to Senator Jepsen; Colleen Getz, assistant to Senator Brady; Don Imgram, assistant to Senator Quayle; Robert Nichols, assistant to Senator Jackson; Arnold Punaro, assistant to Senator Nunn; and Gregg Pallas, assistant to Senator Exon.

OPENING STATEMENT BY SENATOR JOHN TOWER, CHAIRMAN

Chairman TOWER. The committee will come to order. We have convened this morning to consider the nomination of Gen. John W. Vessey, Jr., U.S. Army, to replace Gen. David Jones, U.S. Air Force, as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

I know that I speak for the entire committee when I state that General Jones has performed in an exemplary manner in his 4-year tenure as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs. The professional military judgment which he provided this committee permitted us to make much more informed judgments on many critically important issues affecting the national security issues of this country than otherwise would have been possible.

So, we hope General Jones will continue, even after his retirement, to share with us his views on these as well as other defense-related matters about which he has strong feelings.

I do not need to remind my colleagues the nomination of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff is unquestionably the most important nomination which this committee, perhaps any other committee, is required to consider. The Chairman by statute presides over the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and in turn is the principal military adviser to the President and the National Security Council and the Secretary of Defense.

In short, the Chairman plays a vitally important role in formulating programs and policies which for better or worse will have a profound influence on the national security of the United States for several decades.

General Vessey, you are to be congratulated because by virtue of your nomination the President and the Secretary of Defense have indicated to us that you have the integrity, the intellect, the judgment, the fortitude and the broad military experience which one must have to properly carry out the responsibilities of this position.

I am convinced that if confirmed you will be required during your term of office to make judgments on perhaps the most important issues concerning national security that this country has ever faced.

This is a position which must be insulated from partisan politics. The President must be afforded the very best possible military advice in order to carry out his primary constitutional responsibility; namely, providing for the national security of the United States.

I note that General Vessey has his family with him today or some of his family. I wonder if Mrs. Vessey and Sarah Vessey will stand so that we can recognize you.

We are delighted to have you here today.

I would like to defer now to Senator Stennis for any comments he may have.

Senator STENNIS. Mr. Chairman, and members of the committee, I believe this is a signal day in many ways for the Government. So many problems coming from all over the world are landing on the President's desk—and under our system this office is the principal adviser, not the only one, but the principal military adviser to the President of the United States.

Along with many others I have been here when things were very acute and the President found himself amidst the gravest of problems—the Cuban missile crisis for one—and calling out for counsel and advice by the military minds on how to best meet the situation.

So, I think the American people can be assured amidst all the worldwide confusion by a man who came from the ranks, enlisted as a private in the National Guard, traveled from there to the Chairmanship of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

I want to assure the people that this gentleman is right for selection to this position. I wish him well as he goes about his duties.

Chairman TOWER. We are delighted to have with us today two of our colleagues, Senator Durenberger and Senator Boschwitz to present General Vessey to us. I will defer to my colleagues. You can proceed in any order that you might have prearranged.

STATEMENT OF SENATOR DAVID DURENBERGER, A U.S. SENATOR FROM THE STATE OF MINNESOTA

Senator DURENBERGER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I am delighted and honored to appear before the committee to introduce John W. Vessey, Jr., the President's nominee for Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Forty years ago a great military leader, Omar Bradley, was known as the soldier's general and Jack Vessey clearly follows in that tradition. He enlisted in the Minnesota National Guard, served 5 years as an enlisted man before receiving a battlefield commission at Anzio. This in itself gives him a unique position in the military service.

Just as important Jack Vessey has served the bulk of his career in combat and command positions. He did not achieve high rank by the easy way or playing the game. He is a leader in the best and truest sense of the word. I think he will bring to the job more than his combat record. He will bring his strong convictions and the skill to state those convictions very clearly.

I am reminded in this regard of a recent exchange of letters with General Vessey shortly after I had suggested slowing down or even the outright cancellation of the AH–64 Apache helicopter. At this time, General Vessey thought he was going to retire to Minnesota. He wrote me a very long and well argued letter supporting this program.

The letter was not drafted by his staff; he wrote it himself. It was a straightforward and candid comment on the value of the helicopter.

So, at a time when many Americans are concerned that our officer corps is more in tune with Pentagon politics than military leadership I think Jack Vessey's qualifications and his personal characteristics are like a breath of fresh air.

At a time when we are entering into what has been called by him the dangerous decade, his abilities and his integrity will be called on every single day. Congress is also facing up to the question of priorities in our defense policies; his background will serve to remind us that it is the individual soldier and not technology which comprises our ultimate weapon. All of this will be expected of General Vessey at a time when he expected to be preparing to retire to a home that he built to replace his cabin on Little White Fish Lake in northern Minnesota. Mr. Chairman, I am pleased to introduce to you a great Minnesotan and a great soldier, John W. Vessey, Jr., and to indicate to this committee the confidence that those of us who know him and respect him as a Minnesotan have in his qualifications to be the President's military adviser.

Chairman TOWER. Thank you, Senator.

Senator Boschwitz?

STATEMENT OF SENATOR RUDY BOSCHWITZ, A U.S. SENATOR FROM THE STATE OF MINNESOTA

Senator BOSCHWITZ. Mr. Chairman, General Vessey brings great honor to all of us from Minnesota by his selection by the President as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

General Vessey, having risen through the ranks, as my colleague has already mentioned, brings the finest traditions to the armed services in addition to the top job that this country offers to a military man.

I know that the turbulent eighties that we have before us are going to demand great devotion, intelligence, and fortitude. It is my hope, as it is your hope, that General Vessey will bring these characteristics to this office. We are sure in Minnesota that he will, and he brings great pride on us all.

Chairman TOWER. Thank you, Senator Boschwitz.

General Vessey, I will insert into the record your nomination reference and biographical sketch.

[The nomination reference and biographical sketch follow:]

NOMINATION REFERENCE

(As in Executive Session, Senate of the United States, March 31, 1982.)

Ordered, that the following nomination be referred to the Committee on Armed Services:

General John W. Vessey, Jr., 703-07-1974, Army of the United States (major general, United States Army) under the provisions of Title 10, United States Code, Section 142, to be Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff, a position of importance and responsibility designated by the President under subsection (a) of Section 601.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF JOHN WILLIAM VESSEY, JR., GENERAL

Date and place of birth: June 29, 1922, Minneapolis, Minn.

Years of active commissioned service: Over 37.

Present assignment: Vice Chief of Staff, U.S. Army, Washington, D.C.

Military schools attended: The Artillery School, Basic and Advanced Courses; the Artillery and Guided Missile School, Advanced Course; U.S. Army Command and General Staff College; Armed Forces Staff College; and Industrial College of the Armed Forces.

Educational degrees: University of Maryland, B.S. degree, Military Science; and George Washington University, M.S. degree, Business Administration.

RECENT MAJOR DUTY ASSIGNMENTS

From—	To—	Assignment
September 1966	September 1967	Executive Officer, 25th Infantry Division Artillery, Vietnam.
October 1967	March 1969	Commander, 3d Armored Division Artillery, United States Army Europe
March 1969	February 1970	Chief of Staff, 3d Armored Division, United States Army Europe.
March 1970	November 1970	Student, United States Army Primary Helicopter School, Fort Wolters, Tex., later United States Army Aviation School, Fort Rucker, Ala.
December 1970	January 1972	Commanding General, United States Army Support Group, Thailand.
February 1972	February 1973	Deputy Chief, Joint United States Military Advisory Group, Thailand.
March 1973	September 1974	Director of Operations, Office, Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations and Plans (redesignated from Deputy Chief of Staff for Military Operations on May 20, 1974), United States Army, Washington, D.C.
October 1974	August 1975	Commanding General, 4th Infantry Division (Mechanized) and Fort Carson, Colo.
September 1975	October 1976	Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations, United States Army, Washington, D.C., and Senior Army Representative, Military Staff Committee, United Nations, New York, N.Y.
October 1976	July 1979	Commanding General, 8th United States Army/Commander in Chief, United Nations Command/Commander, United States Forces-Korea/Commander in Chief, Combined Forces Command

Promotions	Dates of appointment	
	Temporary	Permanent
2d lieutenant	May 6, 1944	
1st lieutenant	Apr. 1, 1946	June 13, 1951.
Captain	Jan. 4, 1951	Oct. 29, 1954.
Major	May 14, 1958	Jan. 26, 1962.
Lieutenant colonel	Jan. 7, 1963	Jan. 2, 1969.
Colonel	Nov. 28, 1967	Mar. 12, 1973.
Brigadier general	Apr. 1, 1971	Dec. 23, 1974.
Major general	Aug. 1, 1974	Aug. 23, 1976.
Lieutenant general	Sept. 1, 1975	
General	Nov. 1, 1976	

U.S. decorations and badges: Distinguished Service Cross; Defense Distinguished Service Medal; Distinguished Service Medal (with Oak Leaf Cluster); Legion of Merit (with Oak Leaf Cluster); Bronze Star Medal (with Oak Leaf Cluster); Air Medals; Army Commendation Medal with V Device; Purple Heart; and Army Aviator Badge.

Source of commission: Battlefield.

Chairman TOWER. General Vessey, we will be delighted to hear from you now. You may proceed in any manner you see fit.

STATEMENT OF GEN. JOHN W. VESSEY, JR., U.S. ARMY

General VESSEY. Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, I am honored to be here today, but I must tell you that I am also humbled and quite surprised to have been chosen for this job.

As Senator Durenberger said, I have been in the military service quite a long time—over 41 years of active service. I have risen to a rank that is far higher than any I ever expected or hoped to achieve.

I realize that the promotions that I have had are due to the fact that I have had some of the best people in the world working for me and due to the fact that I have had the honor to work for and with some of the finest military officers in the world.

When I look at the job of Chairman and the giants who have held that job in the past, including my friend Dave Jones, I frankly ask myself the question: Why in the world am I here? Nevertheless the President did ask me to take this job and I accept the duties without reservation. I think that I understand fairly well what is involved and the grave responsibilities involved.

I pledge to you that, if confirmed by the Senate, I will carry out those duties as well and as faithfully as my abilities permit.

I also understand the grave responsibilities of this committee to help provide defense for the United States, and I pledge to you that I will work openly and honestly with you to help you inform the Congress, and through the Congress, the American people, about the very important defense issues that this country faces.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am pleased to be here.

Chairman TOWER. Thank you, General, for a very fine statement.

General, the first question that I would like to ask you is: Will you always give this committee your best professional military judgment when we ask for it regardless of whether it is consistent with the policy of either the administration or of this committee?

General VESSEY. I understand very clearly my obligation to give you my best professional military judgment and I say unequivocably that I will do that.

Chairman TOWER. Thank you.

General, the annual Defense Department budget has come to embody our Nation's military strategy. However, the Joint Chiefs play only a limited role in the formulation and approval of that budget.

How should the existing budgetary process be changed to allow the Joint Chiefs to make a greater contribution?

General VESSEY. The Joint Chiefs, as you know, by law have the duty to advise the President, the Secretary of Defense and the National Security Council about the needs of the United States for defense forces. In that sense, they do have an opportunity to influence the budgetary process.

On the other hand, they don't get an opportunity as a body to review the budget after it has been put together, but the chiefs of the services—who are in fact members of the Joint Chiefs—have a great deal to do in putting together the budgets of the services.

I think it is possible for the Joint Chiefs of Staff to play a greater role in looking across the services to make sure that the services are tied together properly with their programs.

I believe that can be done, and is done today, in that the Joint Chiefs are obliged to give the Secretary of Defense an assessment of the programs that the services have put together.

Chairman TOWER. Senator Stennis?

Senator STENNIS. Mr. Chairman, I made some remarks a few minutes ago expressing my enthusiastic support for this nomination. I have a brief prepared statement I would like inserted in the record at this point, and again I emphasize what an assurance it is to me to have a man of the background that General Vessey has helping the President as well as the military departments themselves meet the problems that our Nation is faced with.

Clearly he is a man of judgment. I again congratulate him, and I support his nomination as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

[The prepared statement of Senator John C. Stennis follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF SENATOR JOHN C. STENNIS

Mr. Chairman, it is indeed a great pleasure to join with you in welcoming General Vessey here before the Armed Services Committee today. I fully support his nomination as the new Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. The President has made a wise choice for his chief military advisor and our country's highest military office.

The institution of the Joint Chiefs of Staff has a venerable and respected history. Its genesis dates back some 40 years to the early weeks of U.S. participation in World War II, when the Joint Chiefs were chartered to coordinate United States and British strategy and provide unified direction of the American armed forces during the war. The loosely defined functions of the Joint Chiefs during the war also included advising the President on war plans and strategy, military relations with the allies, manpower and material needs of the armed forces, and matters of joint Army-Navy policy.

After the war, during my first year in the Senate, the National Security Act of 1947 established the institution of the Joint Chiefs in law as the principal mili-

tary advisory body to the President and the Secretary of Defense. And two years later, as part of the National Security Act Amendments of 1949, the position of Chairman of the Joint Chiefs was created. Shortly thereafter, General Omar N. Bradley was appointed as the first Chairman. The Defense Reorganization Act of 1958 saw a major refinement in our military command structure which placed the Joint Chiefs of Staff directly in the chain of command from the President through the Secretary of Defense and the Joint Chiefs of Staff to the unified and specified commands to which all our operating forces (with minor exceptions) are assigned. It is essentially this command structure which has remained with us until the present day.

The shape and responsibilities of the Joint Chiefs have been designed and tailored over the years to solidify constitutional established civilian control of the military, improve the coordination of defense planning and operations and enhance the quality and responsiveness of professional military advice to the President, the Secretary of Defense, and other Executive bodies. On the whole, this structure has served our Presidents and Defense Secretaries fairly well in these matters. So we should not lightly tamper with this structure in any radical fashion. Of course, organizational fine tuning—to make the system more responsive and efficient in light of the times in which it must operate—has been accomplished on several occasions over the years. But constructive suggestions for organizational modifications should be examined and discussed closely and carefully before any changes are made.

General Vessey, I know you have accepted this nomination with a full awareness of the serious and multifaceted responsibilities which the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff must assume—especially in a world where national security has become an increasingly complex subject. The chairmanship is an office which has been occupied by some of our nation's most distinguished military leaders. The current occupant, General Jones, has carried on that tradition, serving his country most ably over the last four years with frank, reasoned judgments and sound advice on all matters of decisions crucial to our national security. I commend him for a job well done.

General Vessey is more than equal to the task, indeed the challenge, which lies before him. His military record is exemplary and almost unparalleled. It is a career spanning over 40 years of faithful, untiring service in the military forces of his country. Called to active service in February 1941 as an enlisted man, he has risen from a battlefield commission on the beaches of Anzio, Italy, in 1944 to the position of Vice Chief of Staff of the Army. During his illustrious career, General Vessey has done stints in major command positions throughout the world, including Europe, Korea and Southeast Asia. He is a proven combat officer, who has been described as a "soldier's soldier," a "mud on his boots" officer. These appellations are distinguished accolades for we all know that our soldiers, sailors and airmen are the heart and soul of our military capability; our most important military resource. Without them we would have nothing more than large inventories of sophisticated equipment. So a man who has been with and led the troops—has had his fingers on the pulse of combat in many regions of the globe—is especially well-qualified to be the President's chief military counsel.

Now, I know that General Vessey is a student of the times. And for the moment these are difficult ones. Our great nation is going through a period of economic stagnation which is affecting many Americans. It is a condition which does not contribute to our national security; for as I have said before, without a strong economy we cannot achieve a strong and lasting defense capability. These times are necessitating that the Executive Branch, the Congress and in the country focus sharply on our priorities and allocate our budgetary resources in a fashion that contributes both to the economic health and the security of our nation. Part of that prioritization apparently will be reflected in a reduction in the military budget levels originally planned for the next three fiscal years; the President has now proposed such a reduction. However, even with the proposed reduction, we still would be substantially boosting our allocation of resources to defense to over $251 billion in fiscal year 1983 alone—a massive amount from anyone's perspective. But it is especially massive in the eyes of the American taxpayer. The size of the sum and the importance of the capability it is intended to buy both demand that these dollars be spent responsibly and efficiently. We must strive to get the absolute most out of every dollar we allocate for defense. Frugality is a byword which I have repeatedly associated with our defense spending over the years. Even at the risk of sounding redundant I am constrained to commend it to you here today. Without frugality public support for the continued rise in defense expenditures surely will erode with startling rapidity.

As a final thought, General Vessey, I commend to you the importance of our Guard and Reserve forces. They make up the bulk of our combat power. We should devote more attention to them when it comes time to divide up our budget resources each year. Investment in modern, up-to-date equipment—of which there is a shortage in many of our Guard and Reserve units—will provide a substantial return in terms of military capability in the long run.

In conclusion, General Vessey, I wish you nothing but the best in the profound task which faces you in your new position. You will have my support and, I am sure, the support of all my colleagues on this Committee in that endeavor. I look forward to your forthright, unvarnished, honest advice and counsel in the important matters which we will be jointly dealing with in the future.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman TOWER. Senator Goldwater?

Senator GOLDWATER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I know this may sound a little unusual coming from a man who occasionally has associated with the Air Force, but I started as a lieutenant in the infantry back in 1930 with the 25th Infantry in Fort Huachuca and I served in the Army Air Corps before the Air Force was ever heard of.

I just want to say about General Vessey that I don't think I have ever known a four star officer who came all the way up from the bottom. His record, in my mind, speaks for itself. A man has to be the best to achieve what he has.

One question I have: General Jones, a number of months ago, made a statement to the effect that he felt that there had to be some changes in the Joint Chiefs, probably in the doctrine. I agree with that. I wonder if you feel that you would be agreeable to changes if they had to be made?

General VESSEY. Senator, let me say first that I knew that General Jones was going to propose some changes. I had looked forward with a great deal of delight to reading about the debate that would take place over those changes, and I expected to be doing that from my home in northern Minnesota. Now I find myself up to my neck in the middle of those suggestions.

I think that any organization can be improved. Certainly the JCS and its functioning can be improved. Both General Jones and my current boss, General Meyer, have made some suggestions for change.

As you know, a subcommittee of the House Armed Services Committee is holding hearings on those suggestions now. They have had witnesses which include two former chairmen, I think eight or nine former Chiefs, a number of former Commanders in Chief, at least two former Secretaries of Defense, and various other experts. I would expect all of them are more expert than I on this whole question, and I want to tell you that the range of advice is as wide as the scale is itself.

I think that this committee, if it holds hearings on the subject, and the House Armed Services Committee can find a thread that may lead to sensible changes in the organization of the JCS.

There are several clear questions that have been raised. One is: Does the Nation want to go to a defense general staff of the type that the law has specifically prohibited since the Defense Reorganization Act of 1947, and do we want to give more power to the Chairman in the direct chain of command?

The second question which has been posed is: Should the chiefs of the services continue to be a part of that body that gives strategic

advice to the President, Secretary of Defense, and Congress; or should they be separated and restricted to running their services?

There are strong arguments on both sides of that question.

Third is the question of how to deal with differing views among the advisers to the President and Secretary of Defense and the Congress. Much has been made out of the fact that the Joint Chiefs of Staff sometimes differ.

I notice that some call the differing interservice bickering. I have sat in as acting member of the Joint Chiefs. I haven't seen much interservice bickering. I have seen some honest differences of opinion when you get five men in a room with about 150 to 160 years of military service combined and they are facing the grave issues that the chiefs address. I would think that it would be unusual to always find unanimity.

So we have to find a way to deal with differences.

Do I agree? Yes; I agree with many of the things that General Jones and General Meyer have proposed, but those fundamental questions have to be answered by the President, Secretary of Defense, and Congress about which direction we want to go to change that organization, if it is to be changed.

Senator GOLDWATER. Thank you very much, General.

Mr. Chairman, I have an article that I would like to have inserted in the record which appeared in this issue of Army Aviation relative to General Vessey.

I might point out to my colleagues that he wears the wings of an Army Aviator and the Distinguished Service Cross, the second highest honor we can give.

Chairman TOWER. Thank you, Senator Goldwater. That article will be made part of the record.

[The Army Aviation article follows:]

[From Army Aviation]

REAGAN CHOICE FOR NATION'S TOP MILITARY POST

(By Richard Halloran)

WASHINGTON, March 4.—On the Anzio beachhead in Italy in May 1944, John W. Vessey, Jr. was the first sergeant of an artillery battery. Next July 1, after 41 years of military service, General Vessey is scheduled to become the nation's top soldier as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

General Vessey, who is currently the Vice Chief of Staff of the Army, has spent much of his career out of the Washington limelight as a combat commander of ground forces. He has a particular interest in Latin America, according to those who know him, and a quiet empathy for allies.

How the 59-year-old general came to the attention of the Secretary of Defense Caspar W. Weinberger, who recommended the nomination to President Reagan, was not immediately clear. The President disclosed the nomination, which caught Washington largely by surprise, as he headed for a vacation in California.

As Vice Chief of Staff, General Vessey had the job of running the Army's day-to-day operations while the Chief of Staff, General Edward C. Meyer, has planned for the Army of the future and dealt with the Defense Secretary as a member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

PRAISE FROM ARMY CHIEF

Whatever the case, perhaps the officer most enthusiastic about General Vessey's nomination, which must be approved by the Senate, was the general's boss, General Meyer. In a brief telephone interview, General Meyer said, "He's a selfless individual who really does put nation ahead of self."

When President Carter reached well down into the ranks of lieutenant generals to appoint General Meyer Chief of Staff in 1979, the President in effect passed over General Vessey, then General Meyer's senior. But General Vessey, at General Meyer's request, took the job as Vice Chief of Staff. "It was a very selfless thing for Jack to do," General Meyer said. "I've used that as an example for all my soldiers out there."

General Meyer continued, "He understands the big picture. He understands the broader issues of policy and interrelationships that are absolutely essential in that job. He's not going to permit himself to become an operations sergeant."

"General Vessey will do the kinds of things that the chairman ought to be doing, which are looking at broad policies and being able to articulate the issues so that we make the right decisions in the very critical period ahead," General Meyer said.

"COOL, CALM AND METICULOUS"

"He's a very cool and calm man," said a general who has worked with General Vessey. "He's very meticulous about detail. He has a fantastic memory and once he reads or hears something, he can pull it out in an instant."

Said another general who asked not to be identified: "When he has something to say, it makes infinitely good sense. He speaks in simple, declaratory sentences. He has a remarkable capacity to size up a situation with common sense."

General Vessey's record shows that he was something of a late bloomer. After he was promoted from first sergeant to second lieutenant for distinguishing himself on the battlefield, he worked his way up through ranks in the Army. But he did not get his college degree, a bachelor of science from the University of Maryland, until he was 41 years old and a lieutenant colonel.

Two years later, he received a master's degree from George Washington University. He went to helicopter school as a colonel at the age of 48. Most of the students were young enough to be his sons.

FOUGHT IN NORTH AFRICA

John William Vessey, Jr. was born in Minneapolis on June 29, 1922, and enlisted in the National Guard in 1939. He was called to active service in February 1941, before the United States entered World War, II and later fought with the 34th Infantry Division in North Africa and Italy.

In his more recent career, General Vessey has been mostly a troop commander. He was commander of an infantry division's artillery; chief of staff of an armored division; commanding general of the Fourth Infantry Division at Fort Carson, CO, and commanding general of the Eighth Army and United States Forces in South Korea.

He has also been an operations officer here in Washington and was Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations in 1975 and 1976 when one of his principal subordinates was then-Lieutenant General Meyer. General Vessey has been Vice Chief of Staff since 1979.

General Vessey has earned seven major combat decorations, including the Distinguished Service Cross, the Army's second highest, and the Purple Heart for a wound in Vietnam.

The general is married to the former Avis C. Funk of Minneapolis. They have three children, John William, III, who is 32; Sarah Ann, 28; and David, 25, a Chief Warrant Officer in the Army.

Chairman TOWER. Senator Jackson?

Senator JACKSON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I am delighted to join with my colleagues in a strong endorsement for General Vessey's nomination. The question that I have asked over the years is: Do you feel that you can independently and conscientiously give the necessary professional advice to the committees of Congress that will make it possible for us to discharge our constitutional responsibilities without regard to any conflicts you may face on the executive side?

This is the age-old question that we face up here. It gets back to that fundamental question of integrity and sometimes it is a hard decision for the professional soldier to make. Obviously we expect you to

be loyal to both the executive and to the congressional side, but in the last analysis I would hope and trust that conscience and professional judgment will come first.

General VESSEY. Senator, I certainly will do my best to do just exactly that. As Chairman my duties are laid out in law and by directives from the Secretary of Defense.

The principle of civilian control of the military is very clearly established in this country. The Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Chairman are advisers to the Secretary of Defense and the President and the National Security Council. I plan to give my best professional military advice to them.

I understand that my advice may not always be followed. I know that every difference of opinion is not necessarily a difference of principle. I intend to do my best to carry out the decisions of the President and the Secretary of Defense whether they agree with my advice or not.

At the same time, if it is an issue over which I need to advise the Congress—the law specifically provides for me to come and advise the Congress after I have told the Secretary of Defense what I intend to do—I will do so.

If I am asked for my own personal opinion or advice on any question by the Congress, I understand my obligation to give that and I plan to do so.

If I can't live with the decision of my civilian leaders, then I will simply have to check out.

Senator JACKSON. General, that is an excellent statement. You have my vote.

Senator GOLDWATER [presiding]. Thank you, Senator Jackson.

Senator Warner?

Senator WARNER. General, in my judgment the most important thing you are going to have to deal with in the near future is the rethinking of America's nuclear policy. As we are testifying here today, Secretary Haig is testifying at this moment upstairs on a resolution submitted by Senator Jackson and myself and a resolution by Senator Kennedy and my colleague from Oregon Senator Hatfield.

An important part of that discussion is the President's statement that the United States is inferior in terms of its nuclear capability.

As the President's principal adviser in the near future how would you counsel him on that question?

General VESSEY. Each side, Senator, builds its own forces to do the jobs that its leaders believe they have to do. We built our nuclear forces for very specific reasons. Those reasons have altered slightly through the years, but by and large we built what we believed to be a deterrent force, originally to deter attack by Soviet conventional means. Then as the Soviets developed a nuclear capability we had to have one to deter nuclear attack by the Soviets.

Our forces were built to do specific things. The Soviets built a force to do the things that they believe they have to do. I believe that the Soviet Union wants to build an atmosphere in which they can pursue their own political objectives in the world without the United States threatening to interfere with their pursuit of those objectives.

Now if you look at what the Soviets have built, they have built a lot of intercontinental ballistic missiles, more missiles than we have.

They have modernized their force. They are on about the fifth generation of inte. continental ballistic missiles now.

They have built a hard target kill capability to threaten our Minuteman missiles. They have a vast R. & D. program to continue to modernize that force.

If you count missiles and warheads and megatonnage, the Soviets can do an awful lot of damage to us, probably more damage than we can do to the Soviet Union. So, in that sense they perhaps are superior to us.

Now the question is: What do we want to do with our forces? We need to decide what it is we want to do and build the forces to do that.

We don't want a war and we particularly don't want a nuclear war. But at the same time as we go about our business in this world of nation states, which is the only world we have, we don't want to be paralyzed by the fear of war as we pursue our economic, political, social and cultural objectives.

So, we need a good solid nuclear deterrent capability that can be coupled with what the President has proposed: Limitations on nuclear arms.

Now such things as freezes become ends in themselves. They have to be considered in the light of the security of the United States and our allies. That is really what our objective is. That is what we built those nuclear weapons for in the first place. As we examine those other propositions, we need to make sure that we consider the security of the United States and our allies, the role of our own nuclear weapons and the proposed reductions, and freezes or whatever happens to be proposed. We have to consider all those points along with our conventional forces and the other elements that provide defense for our country.

Senator WARNER. There is a growing feeling in this country, and frankly I hail the increasing number of citizens who are taking their time to study and analyze these problems and speak out on the issues, whether it is at the town meeting level or in a State's referendum. But I think it is the responsibility of the President, yourself, and those of us here in Congress, to develop a framework within which we can all achieve the ultimate goal; namely, substantial reduction of the nuclear arsenals of the superpowers.

As I said, Senators Hatfield and Kennedy and many others are recommending a nuclear freeze. Senator Jackson and myself are recommending a substantial reduction. However, we feel that the President should have the flexibility to modernize to the extent he deems it necessary at the same time that he is conducting negotiations.

Which of those two options would you favor?

General VESSEY. Senator, it is absolutely essential that the President have the opportunity to modernize our own force. The Soviets have already modernized their force and certainly as we go toward reductions we can expect the Soviets to reduce the older part of their force if in fact they agree to any reduction.

Now the idea of reducing the probability of nuclear war by reducing the risks and consequences of war through arms control without addressing the idea of overall defense concomitantly is very dangerous. That is what the freeze does in my view. It does not recognize the risks that it might entail.

Just simply freezing or reducing arms alone does not necessarily reduce the probability of war or the probability of nuclear war. We need to modernize our strategic nuclear force.

Senator WARNER. I would judge then that you would be supportive of a program for the MX missile and the continuation of the B–1 bomber, the cruise missile program, and the Trident submarine program?

General VESSEY. Yes; I believe that on balance it makes sense for us to go ahead with those programs.

Senator WARNER. General, I want to turn briefly to the War Powers Act which, as you know, recites the constitutional responsibilities of both the executive branch and the Congress when the decision has to be made with respect to the ultilization of our Armed Forces.

Quite frankly, I am becoming somewhat concerned over the Falkland situation. I know this country presently is providing some logistical assistance, but thus far no direct military support has been given. I hope it will never have to be given by the United States.

The precise question I ask of you is: The War Powers Act provides that the President must come to the Congress and consult prior to the introduction of any U.S. forces into hostile situations.

In the case of the raid on Iran secrecy was paramount to the extent that if there was any consultation it was very, very limited.

In my judgment the Falkland Island situation does not involve an element of secrecy. Therefore, should it be the judgment of President Reagan that we have to introduce some element of military participation, in my judgment, he should come to the Congress beforehand for purpose of the consultation rather than after the fact.

What is your view?

General VESSEY. I wouldn't represent myself as an expert on constitutional law, Senator. I think that the President and his advisers have to wrestle with that situation. I think that in the case of the Falklands certainly I, like you, hope that we don't get involved in that militarily at all. I don't see any reason why we should have any need to get involved.

If we are to get involved, I would expect the President would have time to inform the Congress.

Senator WARNER. Do you see any scenario now which would involve such an element of secrecy that the consultation could not take place beforehand?

General VESSEY. I can't see any.

Senator WARNER. Thank you, General. You have my support.

Senator GOLDWATER. Senator Byrd?

Senator BYRD. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I feel General Vessey has splendid qualifications and I am very glad to support his nomination as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Senator GOLDWATER. Senator Humphrey?

Senator HUMPHREY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

General Vessey, you certainly have a long and magnificent military record. In fact, the length of that period of service was impressed on me when you mentioned that you had been in uniform for 41 years. That means that at the time this Senator was a child you were already in our country's uniform engaged in combat to help maintain a

climate of freedom in this world. From my perspective that is a magnificent record.

General, certainly there is no military position which more strongly feels political pull than the Chairmanship of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. By that I mean there is no office in which more political pressure is brought to bear to have one's views conform to those of the civilian leadership than the office to which you have been nominated.

That assurance of the independence of your judgment from that of the civilian leaders is one of the cardinal considerations of this committee in the confirmation process. So, I am glad to have heard your unequivocal statement that this committee can always depend on your independent professional judgment when you appear before this committee.

I was even more heartened to hear you state in your testimony that there is always the alternative of resignation, to check out as you put it, should your professional judgment significantly disagree with that of your civilian superiors. That statement reinforces my confidence that we can rely fully on your independent judgment.

I believe this next decade is going to be more difficult than any modern times with regard to military matters and that the choices facing the Congress and the American people over the next decade are going to be among the most difficult in our history. So, I hope very much that your resolve to remain independent will never be diminished. We will be depending upon you.

Unfortunately, we cannot always fully depend upon each and every witness who comes before this committee. We do hope that we can depend on the unadulterated testimony of the members of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and particularly its Chairman.

I wish you the very best and congratulate you on this magnificent accomplishment represented by your nomination to this position.

General VESSEY. Thank you, Senator.

Senator GOLDWATER. Senator Levin?

Senator LEVIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

First let me add my congratulations, welcome and good wishes on the new task you are undertaking. You have extraordinary qualifications and background. I want to join my colleagues in welcoming you and indicating our willingness to work with you.

Over the years I have asked your predecessor and some of the chiefs regarding their assessments of our military capability. For instance, last year I asked General Jones whether or not he would swap our military capability for that of the Soviets overall. His answer was no.

I would like to know whether you would swap U.S. military capability overall for that of the Soviets?

General VESSEY. Well, Senator, first let me say that I don't think you can separate our military capability from the other aspects of our country as you look at a comparison of us and the Soviets. Our strength comes not just from our military but also from our political system, our economic system, and our advantages in agriculture and technology. When you look at our GNP—which is twice that of the Soviets—the standard of living of our people is far higher than that of the Soviet citizens.

We have the advantages of free men in pursuing whatever it is we want to pursue. The Soviets have a different world in which they live.

As someone on my staff once quipped, "the Soviet Union is the only nation in the world surrounded by hostile Communist neighbors."

We don't have that disadvantage. We have strong and good allies with the same general goals that we have in this world.

Now when you compare our military forces with the Soviet Union you have to, as I did earlier, recognize that their forces were built for different jobs. When you look at some of the things the Soviets have done over the past 20 years you can get frightened. They have spent an average of, I think it is, about 15 percent of their gross national product for defense while we have spent an average of about 5 percent for ours.

They have made a steady increase in both their nuclear forces and conventional forces. They have continued to modernize through the years. They have fielded, as I said earlier, four or five new intercontinental ballistic missiles while we have tried to get out three. They have fielded four or five versions of tanks while we have tried to get out one new one.

They have copied all sorts of things from us and improved them and got them out in larger numbers. Certainly when you measure the number of divisions, missiles, and aircraft, they have some significant advantage over us.

I would take some of the things that the Soviets have for their forces in terms of numbers and give them to our forces, but overall would I trade with Marshal Ogarkov? Not on your life, not to live there or have his job or his responsibilities or to have his forces in comparison to ours.

Senator LEVIN. I appreciate your answer.

Focusing on the military capability aspect, is your answer that you would not trade?

General VESSEY. I would not trade.

Senator LEVIN. President Reagan in a news conference in early April stated that on balance the Soviet Union has a definite margin of nuclear superiority.

What is your opinion on that issue?

General VESSEY. As I said to one of the other Senators earlier, you have to look at what the force was built to do. The Russians can throw a lot more megatonnage at us—more missiles—than we can throw at them and they can probably do more damage overall, just sheer destruction in the United States, than we can do in the Soviet Union. In that sense there is an element of superiority. I think one has to look more at the trends than at those sorts of simple numbers.

The Soviets are modernizing this force and have continued to modernize the force. We failed to modernize ours. We need to modernize, but we need to do so in the sense it is able to carry out the job that we decide we want to carry out, and not simply compare warheads to warheads and megatonnage to megatonnage.

Senator LEVIN. Looking at all measures of nuclear capability, would you say on balance we are inferior when you measure all nuclear capabilities together?

General VESSEY. That is a difficult question to answer. I think that we can carry out our war plans, but the ability to carry out those war plans, as has been testified to by the Joint Chiefs and by the

Chairman, the margin of risk is growing as the Soviet forces modernize.

Senator LEVIN. You indicated that the Soviets are ahead in megatonnage. I believe that close to one-third of our ICBM megatonnage is on our Titan missiles. It is proposed that we prematurely retire those missiles. I am wondering whether or not you are of the opinion that we should eliminate our Titan missiles this year?

General VESSEY. I really have not looked into that, Senator. Megatonnage alone is not a very good measure of the usefulness of a system; its reliability, its accuracy, and whether you can hit the targets that you want to hit, and whether you can achieve the expected damage criteria that you have set for yourself in hitting those targets, are better measures.

I can't give you an answer. It seems to me that a lot of experts have looked at it and decided it seems to make sense to do it.

Senator LEVIN. Some people have argued that we have short-changed the readiness position of our Armed Forces. I happen to accept and believe that. Others have urged we have short-changed modernization even more.

What do you think we have short-changed more—readiness and modernization or sustainability?

General VESSEY. I find drawing a line between readiness and modernization and readiness and sustainability is a very artificial thing to do. Your force has to be ready to be able to carry out the job that you want it to carry out with an acceptable degree of risk for the time that you are facing.

Every dime we spend on readiness for today's Armed Forces that can't be carried over until tomorrow if the clock strikes midnight and we have not had any war is the cost of peace for today.

Now, the job of the military leaders is to build a force that looks at the risks of today and the risks of the years ahead. We have to be able to carry as much of that readiness that we built for today into tomorrow as is possible.

Therefore, you have to have a very good planned modernization program. You can have all sorts of readiness with old equipment. If you hang onto that old equipment until it is time to go to war and you are ineffective when you go on the battlefield, then you have done the citizens of this country a great disservice.

You can't separate the two. For my own service we have an equipment problem. We simply have not bought enough equipment to equip the entire force. If you are going to buy equipment it makes sense to buy the best equipment, modernized equipment, so that the forces can be most effective when they go out there.

We need to pay attention to all three of those things at the same time.

Senator LEVIN. Navy Secretary Lehman, in early April, said that he would sacrifice one of the proposed nuclear powered aircraft carriers if necessary to assure that Navy personnel get a pay raise.

Do you agree with his statement?

General VESSEY. Well, we got a good pay raise, thanks to Congress, last fall. It has helped very much in the retention of good servicemen in the Armed Forces and it has helped our recruiting problems.

Now we did that once before back in the early seventies when we went to the All-Volunteer Force. Then as we put caps on those raises through the years we saw a steady decline in the quality of people coming in the Armed Forces and we saw an increasing loss of skilled people we needed. Experienced people left the Armed Forces in order to get enough money to feed their families.

So I would hope we don't do that again. We need to keep the pay of the Armed Forces at a level where it is competitive with the rest of society.

Senator LEVIN. If it took the sacrifice of a nuclear aircraft carrier to do it, what would you recommend?

General VESSEY. Yes; if it took the sacrifice of a nuclear aircraft carrier to do it, I would do it. It does not make sense to buy a lot of fancy equipment and not have qualified people to man the equipment.

Senator LEVIN. Thank you. My time is up, Mr. Chairman.

Senator GOLDWATER. Thank you.

Senator Jepsen?

Senator JEPSEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

General Vessey, you have my vote before I ask any questions. I expect that the outpouring of affection and respect that came from many citizens in my State may have been generated because of the days you were with the 34th Division in which many Iowans served.

I will put on file some of the letters and comments in support of your nomination from people who said you are a soldier's soldier. I will see that you receive personal copies. I enthusiastically will support your candidacy.

For the record would you please provide your views on the military buildup taking place in Cuba, how serious a threat this poses to our ability to deploy our forces overseas in a crisis and how we should respond to this new threat?

Also for the record would you please provide your insight in the nature and purpose of the Soviet military buildup and what your view is on our long-term response to this challenge.

[The information follows:]

General VESSEY. Castro's Cuba serves as an arms depot, a supplier of expeditionary forces for the Soviet Union, and a base for Cuban and Soviet-supported intervention in Central America and elsewhere.

Cuba's military personnel strength has increased and its military capabilities have improved dramatically over the last five years. Cuban armed forces include an army of over 225,000, a navy of about 11,000 and air defense forces of 16,000. Per capita, Fidel Castro maintains about a 10 to 20 times larger military effort than any of the other major nations in this hemisphere.

The Soviet influence in Cuba is all-pervasive. A Soviet brigade with a strength of about 2,600 to 3,000 is located near Havana. An estimated 6,000 to 8.000 Soviet civilian advisors are deeply involved in all Cuban governmental activities. In addition, the Soviets provide Cuba's principal economic support—a leverage that Fidel Castro cannot ignore.

It would be a grave mistake to ignore the threat posed by this Soviet military outpost. It supports a massive intelligence collection center and sits astride critical sea lines of communications. In peacetime, 44 percent of all foreign trade tonnage and 45 percent of the crude oil imported into the United States pass through the Caribbean. In wartime, half of NATO's supplies would transit by sea from Gulf ports through the Florida Straits and onward to Europe.

More immediately pressing than this potential threat to the Alliance in the event of war is the Soviet-Cuban effort currently underway in Central America and the Caribbean to encourage subversion and armed opposition to legitimate

governments. This attempt employs all the tools of modern empire building: propaganda and deception; the export of terrorism; substantial shipments of arms; and, finally, the overthrow of established governments followed by the imposition of totalitarian rule, which is intended to be made irreversible through the presence of a large number of Cuban military personnel.

The U.S. response to this threat must embody all of the diplomatic, economic and military tools that we can reasonably employ. Of particular importance is the need for the United States to develop a regional and hemispheric consensus of the threat and appropriate countermeasures. But above all, we must make it clear to both Castro and the Soviets that they do not have a license to continue their aggression.

The Soviet military build-up confronts the United States with a dangerous and unpredictable global threat. The preponderance of the Soviet Union's power remains focused against our European and Asian allies and friends. The Soviet's unprecedentedly large and increasingly sophisticated army of 180 divisions and air forces of 9,000 aircraft and 2,000 helicopters pose a grave threat to the free nations on the Eurasian landmass. Their rapidly expanding, modern navy increasingly threatens our ability to protect the sea lines of communication and reinforce our forward-deployed forces. Also of great concern is the Soviet ability to threaten U.S. interests in Third World areas. The Soviets can endanger U.S. access to critical resources, outflank our traditional alliances, and indirectly attack the coherence of our coalition strategy in many ways: through direct aggression; through a web of surrogate aggressors; through subversion and low-intensity conflict; and through an evolving power-projection capability. Finally, the Soviets' quantitative expansion is now matched by across-the-board qualitative improvements. Soviet force effectiveness through technological sophistication—in part abetted by captured Western technology—challenges and, in many cases, exceeds traditional U.S. technological leads.

From this perspective, it is clear that the United States needs renewed military strength by developing a range of flexible, capable, rapidly-deployable air, land and naval forces to inhibit Soviet coercion, to deter war or to fight if necessary to protect U.S. interests worldwide. We need to assure the survival and endurance of our strategic nuclear forces through the President's modernization programs both to deter attacks against the United States and its allies and to prevent coercion. But, the role of conventional forces is also increasingly important in an era of nuclear parity. We need to work closely with our allies to improve security arrangements for our common defense. We need to be able to employ U.S. forces outside the traditional areas of NATO and Northeast Asia. We need to improve the capabilities of existing forces—especially those forward-deployed. We must carry to completion our modernization plans and deny the Warsaw Pact access to Western technology that improves their military capabilities. We need to enhance our ability both to deploy our forces worldwide, including such areas as Southwest Asia, and to reinforce our forward-deployed forces. Finally, we need to improve our ability to use security assistance for crises and low level conflict. More effective U.S. reponse to low-intensity crises may reduce the necessity to introduce larger forces or the likelihood of a major conflict.

My views of these requirements should not be misinterpreted. My faith in our Nation and in our alliances is such that I am confident we can prevail. The danger, however, is indeed great and our response must be strong and sustained.

Senator JEPSEN. One last thing. We have heard a great deal of debate—mostly one-sided—and publicity regarding the question of the quality versus quantity, especially in the area of our nuclear capabilities.

There are those who say that we have the capability to literally destroy each other. We have not heard many facts regarding what our capability really is and why we need some of the modernization that we have.

There are those who assert that we have placed too much emphasis on the promise of technology and are, consequently, in danger of buying too few weapons or weapons that are of doubtful reliability.

You have had a battlefield commission. You have had many years of field and combat experience. What is your insight into this area

with regard to the stress placed on the promise of technology and, consequently, we may be in danger of buying too few weapons or weapons that are of doubtful reliability?

General VESSEY. We certainly don't want to buy either too few weapons or weapons of doubtful reliability. We need enough weapons and we need weapons of good reliability. Certainly in the past few years in my own service we have stressed a great deal the reliability of the weapons that we are buying.

There has been criticism to some extent because it has been alleged that the armed services have in fact tried to push to the edge of technology to get more capability out of the weapons.

When we decide to modernize the Armed Forces, we have to make a realistic assessment of what we can achieve technologically within the time that we have set for fielding the particular weapon systems.

Sometimes we have been overly ambitious and pushed out beyond the edge of technology, perhaps not the edge of technology that is understood or than can be demonstrated in the laboratory, but sometimes beyond the edge of what can be produced reasonably and successfully by American industry.

I believe that the balance has been kept pretty well. Certainly we have a small Armed Force. We want to give our people some sort of advantage when they go onto the battlefield outnumbered. We don't want to have them believe that bravery alone will help them account for the difference in numbers that they will have to face.

We have promised implicitly very good weapons. We have not always done that because we have been slow in modernizing our forces.

I also know that there is no panacea for all the problems on the battlefield. You certainly can't solve all your problems with technology. Murphy's Law will operate when you are out there; that is, if it can go wrong, it will go wrong.

Almost everything that man can conceive of goes wrong in battle. You have to have the right people there who are able to assess the situation, make the best out of what is happening and then proceed to accomplish the mission.

We need to exploit our technology, give our soldiers, sailors, marines, and airmen the best weapons that we can produce within the budget that the people have decided to spend for defense for this country, and then train them to use them properly.

All of that is mixed together. It is not simple: We will buy cheaper, less technologically sophisticated weapons, and just buy more of them and take higher casualties.

I have a son who is an attack helicopter pilot. I don't want him or any other service member out there flying a cheap helicopter and be one of those casualties that has to be taken because we bought cheap and technologically inferior weapons.

At the same time I want to buy reliable weapons so that he can have confidence that that thing will operate efficiently when he takes it out, whatever its technological capability is.

Senator JEPSEN. Thank you.

Mr. Chairman, I have a letter I would like to read into the record. It is a letter dated March 5, 1982.

DEAR ROGER: President Reagan's decision to name General John Vessey as the next Chairman of the Joint Chiefs has to be lauded as one of his finest actions. I haven't the slightest idea as to those who were instrumental in making the recommendation to the President. However, I am absolutely delighted to know that he listened to that sage advice.

General Vessey is an exemplary individual, as a person, as a soldier and as a patriot. There is no better person for that tough job. In my professional admiration of his many talents and strengths gleaned over years of close association in various assignments and situations he is the best military officer I have been privileged to know.

I hope you will lead the charge in approving his confirmation.

JOHN R. CONNALLY,
Senior Administrative Officer,
The First Savings & Loan in Davenport.

This is a very impressive letter. That is why I have no hesitation in leading the charge that he speaks of.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator GOLDWATER. Senator Brady?

Senator BRADY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I am pleased with your answers to the questions this morning considering the fact that you have had 37 years of excellent service, starting with a battlefield commission, you have my enthusiastic support.

General VESSEY. Thank you.

Senator GOLDWATER. General, before we vote I just want to comment on one statement you just made. If you have the right people you can win. I think that is what prompted you, General Jones and other ranking officers to say they wouldn't trade our forces for the Soviet.

I would rather have one American with me in trouble than a whole squadron of any other men in this whole world.

Thank you for saying that.

Senator STENNIS. If the chairman will yield to me. Just to underscore what you have said, I have great faith in our military strength, including our manpower. But if we lack something, if there is a weakness, it is that we can improve on our manpower system. I look forward to your influence in that field.

Thank you.

Senator GOLDWATER. Thank you, General Vessey, very much for your testimony.

I think we are ready to vote. I suggest that we vote on General Vessey first. Without any objection General Vessey's nomination will be reported to the floor.

As far as I can tell your nomination will be favorably reported to the full Senate. So you have our wishes for and the best of luck.

Thank you.

General VESSEY. Thank you very much, Senator.

Senator GOLDWATER. Today there are pending before the committee 6,776 routine military nominations that are eligible for consideration. These have all been before the committee for the required 7 days and no objections have been raised.

I am prepared to entertain a motion that these nominations be ordered favorably reported by the committee to the Senate.

Senator STENNIS. Mr. Chairman, I so move.

Senator JEPSEN. Seconded.

Senator GOLDWATER. Without objection they will be reported.

Senator GOLDWATER. I would like to make one comment in closing about one of these men, Lt. Gen. Jerome O'Malley, who is being promoted to a four-star general.

I have known this young man since he was a cadet. He is an outstanding man who has done an excellent job in every assignment he has had in the Air Force. It is a pleasure for me to vote for him and to commend him.

Is there any other business to come before this committee?

Questions have been submitted by Senator Thurmond to be answered for the hearing record.

[The questions, with answers supplied, follow:]

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR STROM THURMOND

Senator THURMOND. What are your views about the organization of the JCS?

General VESSEY. Thanks to the very careful and thorough hearing by the Investigations Subcommittee of the House Armed Services Committee, we have received a wide range of advice from men who are now, or were, in the best possible position to render expert judgments. I believe that if this committee holds your own hearings, as I understand you plan to do, the spectrum will be complete. At that point it will be up to the Secretary of Defense and the President to decide what, if any, things they wish to do about the major questions I discussed earlier in my testimony.

Senator THURMOND. What are your ideas for improving it?

General VESSEY. By the time your committee will be completing any hearings you might hold, I will have been in my new position long enough to offer some better informed views to the Secretary of Defense and the President. I am sure you will appreciate and understand that it would be premature to talk to any of the specific reorganization proposals that have been made by General Jones, General Meyer, and other experts until I have been in my new office long enough to offer advice that will be useful to those who will have to make the final decisions.

Senator THURMOND. General Vessey, there has been a great deal of discussion in the public forum about burden sharing with our NATO allies. In light of our commitments to the Rapid Deployment Force, do you feel that NATO countries should increase their defense expenditures and ease some of our defense burden in Europe?

General VESSEY. Yes, our European allies should contribute more to the defense in Europe. We must all do more. We must recognize, however, that the Europeans are making a substantial contribution to their defense and that, like us, they face hard times economically at present. This does not mean we should not ask them to try to do more. We should not, however, try to induce greater European efforts by threatening illogical and irrational unilateral action such as a pullback of our forces.

Senator THURMOND. General Vessey, the United States has neither the sealift or airlift necessary to support the Rapid Deployment Force. Where are these requirements in your order of priorities for our defense?

General VESSEY. Our first priority must be to correct the benign neglect of our forces over the last decade. We must assure that the forces in being are restored to their full capability to carry out the tasks for which they were designed. It makes no sense to have combat forces, especially our forward deployed and early follow-on forces, which cannot respond on short notice and sustain that response to the wide range of threats to our interests.

A vital component of improving the capabilities of existing forces is that our forces in the central reserve in CONUS must be capable of rapid deployment to wherever they are needed whether it be to reinforce our forces now deployed with the forces of our allies in Europe or East Asia or to deter threats to our friends and interests in other areas such as Southwest Asia.

From that perspective, Senator, the urgently needed improvements in our existing forces must be matched by a parallel effort in sealift and airlift forces to provide the means to deploy those forces.

Senator THURMOND. General Vessey, there has been a large amount of popular support for a nuclear freeze. Would you give us your views on this subject?

General VESSEY. Neither a nuclear freeze nor a nuclear build-up are, in and of themselves, ends to be pursued. The end is security for our country and her allies. Insofar as arms control and force modernization contribute to this end, I support them both. Arms control proposals that are made out of the overall context of national security may well increase the probability of war. The President has made a sensible proposal for the reduction of nuclear arms which, if pursued in conjunction with his force improvement plans, can help reduce the risks of nuclear war while improving the security of the U.S. and her allies.

The committee will stand in adjournment.

[Whereupon, at 10:35 a.m., the committee adjourned.]

[The nomination of Gen. John W. Vessey, Jr., was reported to the Senate by Senator Goldwater on May 11, 1982, with the recommendation that the nomination be confirmed. The nomination was confirmed by the Senate on May 12, 1982.]

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